

Friday Khutbah 06/12/2013  
Khushu' (Humility) in Salat

Allah (*Subhanahu wa ta'aala*), out of His mercy for Muslims, made the prayer an obligation upon them. He made it a duty at specific times and urged them to establish it in many Qur'anic verses.

The position of *Salat* in the religion is highly significant and the texts from the Qur'an and Sunnah which confirm this are numerous and well known. However, despite the importance of *Salat*, Muslims have neglected it except a few of them. Some of them have abandoned it completely; some abandon it for some time and then go back to it when they fast Ramadan or perform Hajj or when one becomes sick and so on. Some hypocritically pretend to pray in front of others and desert it when they are on their own.

One form of the neglect of prayer is the failure to perform one or more of its pillars properly. This is something which is very common and widespread in the *Masjids* of Muslims including this *Masjid*. This form of neglect of prayer was the subject of my talk last Friday. I spoke in some details about *Tum'aneenah* (tranquillity or calmness) in performing *ruku'* and *sujud* and the rest of the pillars of prayer. I explained that failure to perform a pillar of *Salat* negates the establishment of *Salat*. It is the establishment of *Salat* that we are commanded to do not just pray in any way.

The first component of the establishment of *Salat* is to perform it at its specified times set by the *Shari'ah*. Allah (*Subhanahu wa ta'aala*.) says in the Qur'an: "Prayer at specific times is an obligation upon the believers."

The second component is to perform the pillars of *Salat* properly. I spoke in some details about these two components. The third component of the establishment of *Salat* is the presence of the heart and *Khushu'*. This is the subject of today's talk.

*Khushu'* in *Salat* is the essence of prayer. Some scholars said: *Salat* without *Khushu'* is like a dead corpse.

What is meant by *Khushu'* is the *Khushu'* of the heart out of exaltation, fear and humility to Allah (*Subhanahu wa ta'aala*.) Whenever a person displays humility on his limbs or outward appearance while his heart is void of it – then that was hypocritical *Khushu'*. Umar ibn al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, looked at a man who bowed his head down and said to him: 'O there! Raise your head for *khushu'* is not in the neck. *Khushu'* does not go beyond the heart.'

Al-Hassan said: 'Some people take up humility in their clothing and arrogance in their hearts. They wear black wool. By Allah! One of them is more arrogant in his black wool than one who is dressed in silk.'

*Khushu'* in *Salat* differs depending on the presence of the heart in the prayer. One gets the reward of prayer according to one's *Khushu'* in it. Ammar ibn Yahsir, may Allah be pleased with him, said: 'I heard Rasulullah (*salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam*) saying: "A man would finish his prayer and only gets one tenth of its reward, one ninth, one eighth, one seventh, one sixth, one fifth, a quarter, a third or half."

Some of the things which help one to have *Khushu'* in *Salat* include:

i) Freeing oneself from preoccupations before starting one's *Salat*. One should not enter into *Salat* while one's mind is busy with worldly issues. One should postpone thinking about

worldly affairs until after *Salat*. It is for this reason that the Prophet (*salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam*) said: “When dinner is ready (present) and the *Iqamah* for ‘*Salat* is made, eat your dinner first.” He also said: “There should be no prayer in the presence of food or when one is pressed by the two filths.” This means that one should not pray when food is present while one is yearning to eat or when one needs to go to the toilet – because these things and the likes take *Khushu’* away.

ii) Another things which helps one to have *Khushu’* in *Salat* is to be aware that one is standing before Allah (*Subhanahu wa ta’aala.*) and that Allah is close to him; seeing and hearing him and being aware of what is in his heart and that if one turns to Allah with one’s heart Allah will turn towards one, and if ones heart turns away, Allah turns away from him.

iii) Another things which helps one to have *Khushu’* in *Salat* to reflect on the meaning of what one does and says in one’s prayer especially on the Qur’an which one reads during the prayer. Reflecting on the words of Allah (*Subhanahu wa ta’aala.*) is the greatest cause for realising *Khushu’* in *Salat*. Allah (*Subhanahu wa ta’aala.*) says: “Had We sent down this Qur’an to a mountain, you would have seen it humbled, burst apart out of fear for Allah. We cite such examples for people so that they may reflect.”

Allah (*Subhanahu wa ta’aala.*) described the believers from among the scholars of the People of the Book as humbling themselves and having *Khushu’* when they hear the words of the Qur’an recited to them. He says (*Subhanahu wa ta’aala.*) “...Verily! Those who were given knowledge before it (the Jews and the Christians), when it is recited to them, fall down on their faces in humble prostration. And they say: "Glory is to our Lord! Truly, the Promise of our Lord must be fulfilled. And they fall down on their faces in tears, and it increases their humility. (*Surah al-Isra* 107-109)

The most important *Surah* to reflect on is *Surah al-Fatiha*, the greatest *Surah* in the Book of Allah which nothing like it was revealed in *az-Zabur*, *at-Turah* or *al-Injeel*. This is the reason why it is repeated in every *raka’at* of *Salat*. Every Muslims must endeavour to understand the interpretation of this *Surah* and its fine meanings.

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Imam Muslim reported from Abu *Hurayrah* that he said: The Messenger of Allah (*salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam*) said: Allah said: I have divided the prayer between Me and My servant into two, and My servant will get what he asks for. When he says: *Al-hamdu-lil-Lahi Rabbil-`alameen*, Allah says: “My servant has praised Me. When he says: *Ar-Rahmanir-Raheem*, Allah says: My servant has commended Me. When he says: *Maliki yawmid-deen*, Allah says: My servant has glorified Me. When he says: *Iyyaka na`budu wa `iyyaka nasta`een*, Allah says: this is between Me and My servant and My servant will have what he has asked for. When he says: *Ihdinas-siratal-Mustaqeem Siratal-ladhina `an `amta `alayhim Ghayril-maghdubi `alayhim waladh-dhaaleen*, Allah says: This is for My servant, and My servant will have what he has asked for.”

Among the things which help one to reflect on the Qur’an is to respond and interact with the verses of the Qur’an which one reads. For example one should say *Tasbih* when one reads the verses of *Tasbih*, say *Isti`adha* (seeking refuge with Allah) when one reads verses of *Isti`adha*, prostrate when one reads the *ayat* of prostration etc.

iv) One of the things which help one to have *Khushu’* in the prayer is to pray behind a *Sutrah* so that no one passes directly in front of him and thus distracts him, and to limit looking beyond the *Sutrah*.

v) One of the things which help one to have *Khushu*'is to look at the place of *Sujud* and not look around and get distracted by what one sees. Ayesha, may Allah be pleased with her, said: 'When Rasulullah (*salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam*) prayed he would lower his head and look at the ground.'

He did not look straight or up to the sky or look around but looked at the place of *Sujud* when standing in prayer. Looking right and left in *Salat* is prohibited, and it is a sign of the lack of *Khushu*' in *Salat*. Ayesha may Allah be pleased with her, said: 'I asked Rasulullah (*salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam*) about turning the sight in *Salat*, and he said: 'It is a theft which *Shaytan* steals from the prayer of the servant of Allah.'